

PICK ME UP



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Price One Penny.
6s. 6d. per annum post free.

OUR FIRST NUMBER.

A celebrated Cardinal once wrote an apology for his own life. We accepted it readily, and we trust the British public will do as much for us, when we offer our modest apology for our own existence.

We don't profess to supply an urgent want, or to fill an aching void in the reading capacity of anybody.

We doubt not that the world would have jogged along pretty much as usual, even if "PICK ME UP" had not appeared; but we are satisfied that there is room for us, and we mean to elbow our way in somehow, and get as near to the front as we can.

We have "picked up" a promising array of talent; fine musical poets in all sorts of keys; draftsmen who can draw a cart or a cartoon with equal facility; writers of fiction who will tell the most tremendous stories, and humorists who will make you laugh or cry at pleasure, just as the fancy seizes them.

We propose to look mainly on the comic side of life, though, like Mr. Wegg, we shall drop into poetry occasionally.

Politics we eschew. We have a notion that the party for the time being uppermost will get along just as well without our assistance. Anyhow, they must try.

We don't profess to improve anybody's mind. It takes us all our time to improve our own.

We don't undertake to insure your life on a railway journey or otherwise, but we will insure you several hearty laughs if you provide yourself with "PICK ME UP" every week.

The bearings of which observations, as Captain Cuttle's friend would say, "lays in the application of 'em," viz. :—

Buy "PICK ME UP!"

SPOFFINS;

OR,

TALES FROM TWICKENHAM.

GOING A-FISHING.—No. I.



WHEN Spoffins retired from "public life," or, to put it more plainly, gave up the "Blue Elephant" in the Whitechapel Road, he made up his mind that henceforth he would do nothing but enjoy himself, and his leading idea of enjoyment (chiefly because he didn't know anything about it) was the following of country pursuits.

Spoffins was a genuine cockney. He had stuck day and night to his business, his sole relaxation being the Annual Beanfeast of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, and a pit-seat at the pantomime. Having now put by enough to supply his needs for the future, he determined to realise his dreams of country life, and to that end hired a house with a large garden in the outskirts of Twickenham.

* *

"Do you know what I'm a-goin' to do, Maria?" inquired Spoffins of his wife one morning before daybreak, a few days after he had taken possession.

"Ow should I know?" replied Mrs. Spoffins drowsily.

"I'm a-goin' fishin'."

"Then mind you shut the front door after you, and do it quiet." She then tried to compose herself to sleep again, but Spoffins continued:

"You don't s'pose I'm a-goin' this minute. I haven't got no rod, nor no catgut, nor no fish-basket."

"There's a fish-basket in the scullery, what Jane brought them oysters 'ome in"—interrupted Mrs. Spoffins.

"That ain't no use! I ain't a-goin' to catch oysters. I'm a-goin' fly-fishin'."

"With one o' them sticky papers round your hat?" murmured Mrs. Spoffins, finishing off her remark with a snore, as she dropped off to sleep again.

"I never knowed such a woman as you, Maria! You never takes no interest in nothink. You can't even wake up when I've got a idea as will redooce our butcher's bill to next to nothink!"

Then Spoffins fell asleep also, and dreamt he was on the banks of the river, hauling out fish of all kinds, salmon, smoked and otherwise, kippered haddocks, bloaters, tins of sardines, and bottles of anchovies. Then a mermaid came along, whom Spoffins chucked under the chin, and asked if she would like to be a barmaid, seizing her by the hair when she attempted to return to her element, the river.

He was awakened by the voice of Mrs. Spoffins:—

"Now then, stoopid, what are you clawin' at my 'ead for?"

"Lor, Maria, is it you?" exclaimed Spoffins, rubbing his eyes. "I was dreamin' I met a mermaid comin' out of the water."

"Oh, indeed! and that's why you chucked me under the chin and tried to pull off what little 'air I've left. If you don't behave yourself better than that when you meets mermaids, you don't go a-fishing with *my* consent!"

But Spoffins was asleep again.

In the morning he went out and bought a large salmon-rod, some flies about as large as undersized bats, some line strong enough to pull out a porpoise, and an enormous creel. Armed with these, a good dinner and a brandy-flask, Spoffins started off for the river.

He selected a lonely spot, and in a few minutes had snapped off all the flies he had brought with him. It was too early to go home, because he hadn't finished the brandy, so he thought he would practise without the flies. Anyhow it would be good exercise. Accordingly Spoffins took the salmon-rod in both hands and thrashed the water unmercifully. A tramp in rags stood and watched him with a contemptuous sneer:—

"Yer don't hexpect to ketch hanythink with a fly at this time of year, do yer?"

"I don't expect to catch anythink without a fly; can't you see I'm only practisin'!" replied Spoffins, laying down his rod and takin' a pull at the brandy-flask.

The tramp gave it up, and departed a sadder and wiser man.

After an hour or so with the salmon-rod and the brandy-flask, Spoffins thought he had had enough of it, at any rate of the rod, and he began to think about returning home and to consider what fish he should purchase to escape Mrs. Spoffins' ridicule. Feeling in his pocket, he found he had only three-half-pence.

"A herrin' and a 'arf for three ha'pence, 'ow many for eleven

pence?" With a dim idea that he had heard something like it before, he thought it over for some time, but finally gave it up. "I've a sort of a notion the answer's fifteen," he said, "but as I ain't got eleven pence, it don't much matter; and herrin's ain't fresh-water fish, neither."

He began to feel miserable. The brandy was all gone, and he had caught nothing but a cold. He was just preparing to put up his rod, when he noticed something floating slowly down the river, turning round as it did so.

"It's a human bein'!" cried Spoffins, for the mist was rising as the night came on, and he could not see very plainly. As it came nearer he poked at it with his rod, whereupon it hissed at him.

"It's a duck!" said Spoffins. "Never mind, all's fish that comes to my net, as the sayin' is, and duck's a fresh-water fish, anyhow."

Making a lasso of his line he threw it towards the bird. By mere chance the loop fell over its head. He drew it to the bank. It proved to be a lame goose. He caught it without much difficulty, and rammed it into his fishing basket.

"It's better to really catch somethink than to go and buy it," soliloquised Spoffins, "one never knows what you mayn't catch if you fishes with no fly."

While he was taking his rod to pieces a rural policeman approached and stood looking at him, his dog paying particular attention to Spoffins's basket, which he had slung on his back.

"Heavy basket, sir?" asked the policeman.

"Pretty fairish!" replied Spoffins, wondering how long the man had been watching him.

"Hiss!" went the goose in the basket.

"What's that?" inquired the policeman.

"What?"

"Depend upon it that's one of Squire Muntford's geese, sir. There 'ave bin some lost lately; it's about in these 'ere bushes. Come along, Jack!—He's so fond of fish, sir, he can't leave 'em alone. Just give 'im a little un, sir, just to keep 'im quiet."

"I can't! I—I've only got exactly the right number!"—stammered Spoffins.

"Hiss!" went the goose in the basket.

"There it is again! Well, me and my dog will soon find it. Goodnight, sir!—Come away from the gentleman's fish, you rascal. Goodnight, sir!"

"Goodnight!" said Spoffins, as he left the policeman to his wildgoose chase, and hurried home.

Spoffins didn't mind carrying the basket across the meadows and along the country roads, but he didn't much like going through the town with it. At last he made up his mind to walk quickly through and chance it.

When he reached the first full-lighted shop he was stopped by Mrs. Plumphthimble, who would insist on introducing him to her cousin's mother-in-law.

"Hiss!" went the goose in the basket.

"What in the world was that?" asked Mrs. Plumphthimble.





"It's an escape of gas, I think!" replied Spoffins, anxious to get away.

"Escape of geese?"

"No—gas!"—stammered Spoffins.

"Hiss!"—went the goose in the basket.

"I really believe it's your fish!" cried the ladies; Mrs. Plumphimble adding—

"You should kill 'em when you catch 'em!"

"It keeps 'em fresher not to!" said Spoffins; "but I'll fry 'em directly I gets 'ome, that 'll stop their noise! Good evening, ladies!"—and Spoffins made a bolt for it.

When he reached home, he entered by the back way. Jane was in the scullery, and Mrs. Spoffins in the breakfast-room. He took off his fishing-basket and put it on the kitchen-table, where he noticed with satisfaction that a substantial tea had been got ready for him on a tray, and then went upstairs to change his things.

Jane, coming out of the scullery, saw the basket moving on the table, and immediately went in to her mistress:—

"If you please, mum, master's brought 'ome a basket full of fishes, an' they're a-wagglin' about in the basket like anythink."

"Mr. Spoffins has caught some fish, has he?" said Mrs. Spoffins, rising. "I knowed he would, Jane, he's so clever; he takes up anything so quickly."

They both went into the kitchen, and opened the basket to peep in, when the goose thrust its head out and hissed at them. Mrs. Spoffins, thinking it was a serpent, fainted into Jane's arms, and Jane, not being able to support her weight, forthwith let her down on the floor, meanwhile kicking and screaming on her own account.

The unaccustomed shaking had probably made the goose hungry. Emerging from the basket, it gobbled up the poached eggs and fishcakes prepared for Spoffins's tea, and finished up by swallowing half the milk, finally getting its head firmly fixed in the milk-jug in trying to get at the remainder.

Hearing the screams, Spoffins came downstairs in his shirt and trousers:—

"Get up!" he shouted, hauling on to his wife, who was uppermost, "you'll smother the girl!"

"I'm stung by a sarpint!" gasped his wife; "get some chloride of lime! It ain't a heel you've caught, it's a sarpint, a vehement sarpint!"

Then Mrs. Spoffins screamed, and the goose, with its head in the milkjug, flew on to the plate-rack, bringing most of the crockery down with a smash on the floor.

Spoffins indulged in some language that could not be put in a Sunday-school book, and altogether there was a lively five minutes in the kitchen.

"It's only a duck!" shouted Spoffins.

"Let's get up, mum, you've flattened me to nothink, an' that dratted thing 'as eaten heverythink off the table, and flowed away with its 'ead in the milkjug."

"Why couldn't you wait for me to come and show it you? Women are allays so uncommon curious. It serves you right for meddling. Now let's try and catch the duck!"

"It ain't a duck, it's a goose!" said Mrs. Spoffins, making a grab at it and missing it. "Where did you find it?"

"Find it? I didn't find it. I caught it. I fished for it!" answered Spoffins proudly.

"I didn't know people fished for geese."

"Ah, Maria, you don't know everythink! Then Spoffins, finding he couldn't catch the goose, turned to his handmaiden and said:

"Jane, put that goose back in the basket, and bring in my tea."



"It's et it hup, sir!"

"What's ate it?" roared Spoffins—"the goose—then I'm—then I'll eat the goose! I was goin' to make a pet of her, but I've changed my mind. Bring my coat down, and let me 'ave somethink, I'm starvin'!"

The next day the goose, placed outside for change of air, ate up most of the lawn, then the wall-flowers, then the chrysanthemums, and everything green it came across, reducing the path, bed, and lawn to one level surface of mud.

Spoffins thereupon entered into an arrangement with a man, who lived at a level crossing close by, to take care of it at

PICK ME UP.



night, and allow it to feed in the running ditch and on the grass at the side of the road for sixpence per week, till the 20th of December, when Spoffins would send the butcher to kill it for Christmas. He called occasionally to see that the goose was all right, and found it either sitting on the gatekeeper's knee, helping him to look out for the trains, or splashing about in the ditch.

When the man had kept it for five weeks he called for his 2s. 6d., which was paid him. But when Spoffins sent for the goose a few days afterwards, the gatekeeper sent word to say that he was very sorry, but someone had stolen it.

Spoffins does not go so far as to say that the gatekeeper ate it, but he knows that the gatekeeper had goose for dinner on Christmas-day, and the dustman told Jane that he found a goose's head and two feet in that gatekeeper's dustbin.

Spoffins presented his rod to the Town-hall to light the starlight on the ceiling with. The fishing-basket Jane finds useful for clothes-pegs. He has given up fishing; he says he's tried both ways, and, all things considered, it's cheaper to buy your fish ready-made.

N.B.—The experiences of Spoffins will be continued in future issues. Next week:—

SPOFFINS AND HIS NEIGHBOURS.



MAKING FUN OF THE FARE.

IMPATIENT PASSENGER.—Conductor! Is this omnibus going on?

CONDUCTOR.—Well, sir, if you asks ME, I should say it was standin' still. But I'll inquire of the driver.

AMBIGUOUS.

STUDENT.—Before leaving the Institution, I wish to express my gratitude for the instruction I have received. To you, Professor, I owe all I know.

PROFESSOR.—You are very kind, but it is hardly worth mentioning.

TOO FAITHFUL.

1.



Halloa, Smith, old man, how are you?

2.



But Smith's faithful dog Pinch allowed no liberties with his master.

3.



BROWN.—Confound your dog, Smith, he's eaten half my coat-tail.

SMITH.—Never mind, old man, I dare say it won't hurt him.

The old maid's prayer—

"PICK ME UP."

Motto for Sales by Auction

Be contented with your lot!

**NOT LIKELY.**

TRAMP.—“Spare a trifle for a poor man, sir.”

CLERGYMAN.—“Certainly not. Why, you’re a strong, able-bodied man.”

TRAMP.—“D’ye think I’m goin’ to cripple myself for the sake of a mouldy copper?”

OUR FRIENDS.

GREEN: So you saw my tragedy last night. How did you like it?

BROWN: First-rate, old man!

GREEN: Good scene, isn’t it, in the first act, when the gipsy curses the duchess?

BROWN: ‘Pon my word, I forget. But I was a little late, you know. I’m afraid I must have missed that.

GREEN: Did you? I’m sorry for that. How did you like the murder scene in the second act?

BROWN: Well, you see, I had promised to meet Robinson and one or two other fellows at supper, so I was obliged to leave before that.

TAKEN FROM LIFE.

A member of the Cannibal Club came into the club one day with a curiosity, which he had just seen in a shop window. It was a photograph of a donkey, underneath which was written—

“Photograph of a dead donkey, taken from life.”

The absurdity of the inscription caused some amusement, but an older and wiser member maintained that the inscription was correct. He remarked that, if the donkey hadn’t been taken from life, it wouldn’t be dead; and he accordingly added the following lines to those at the foot of the card:—

“Here is a picture of a donkey dead,
‘Taken from life.’ Ridiculous! they said;
And yet, if ’t were not dead, what then, I pray?
It would, like you, dear boys, still live and bray.”

SPLINTERS

The marksman who aims at the whole target, will seldom hit the centre.

A suspicious parent makes an artful child.

Dead men and fools never change their opinions.

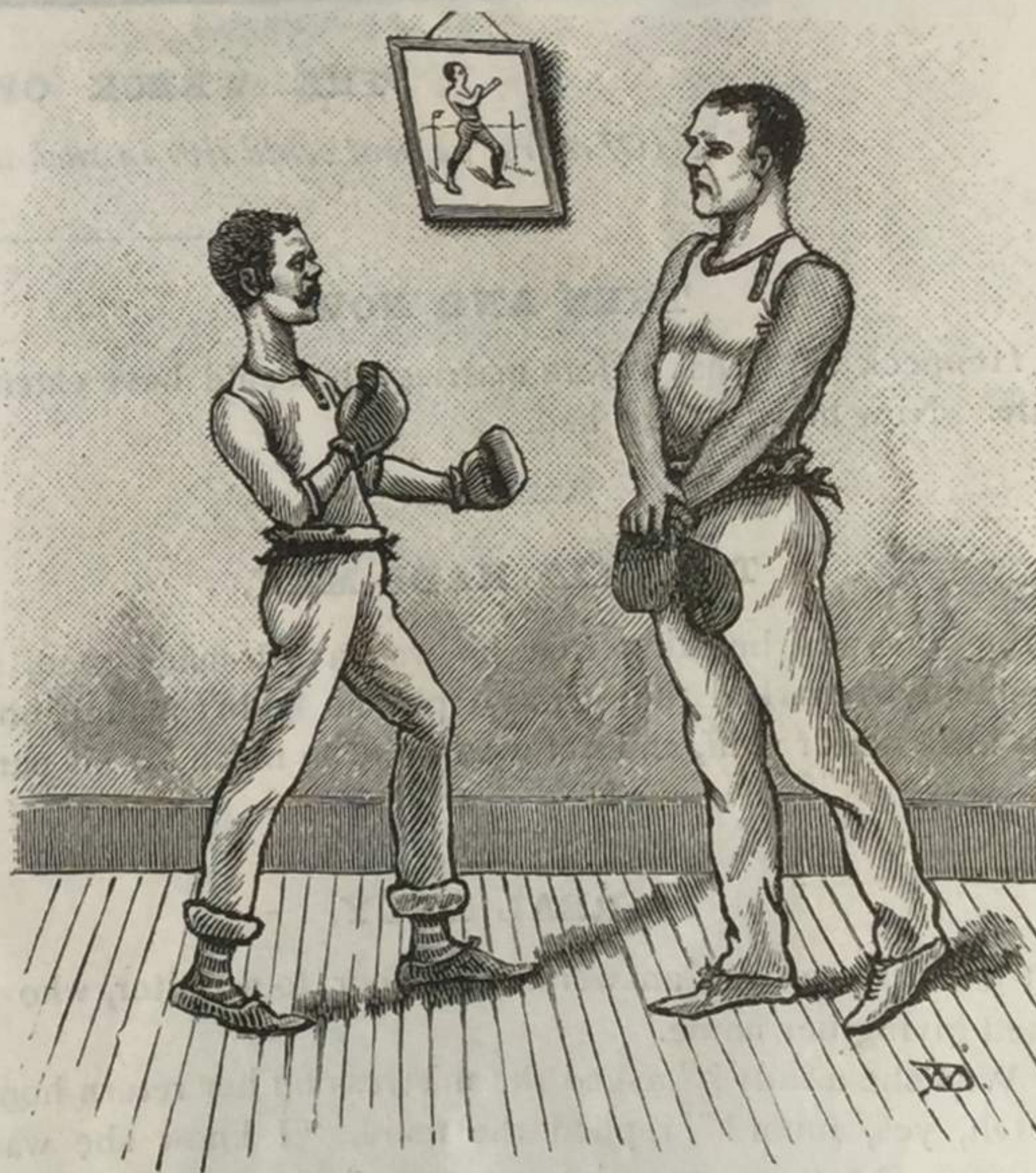
He who cannot bear the clapper should not pull the bell.

A good name may wear out, a bad one may be lived down; but a nickname lasts for ever.

An irritable man is like a hedgehog rolled up the wrong way, tormenting himself with his own prickles.

The favours of fortune are like steep rocks; only eagles and creeping things reach the summit.

If you wish to appear agreeable in society, you must consent to be taught many things which you know already.

PLEASANT FOR SPRIGGINS.

PROFESSOR OF THE NOBLE ART:—Now, Sir, throw yourself into hattitude, while I put in numbers one, two, three. Be pertickler with yer guards, please. I had the misfortun’ to give a gentleman about your size a little tap last Tuesday week, an’ he ain’t got over it yet.

MISTAKEN KINDNESS.

“My friends,” said an outspoken clergyman to his congregation, “I daresay you put buttons in the collection-plate with the kindest of intentions, but they are quite useless to me. I hardly like to mention it, but I—never wear braces!”



THE WRECK OF H.M.S. "CATERPILLAR."

(Of course no boat could live in such a sea, but our Artist would have it, and he got it.)

THEN AND NOW.

Henpeck says that before marriage he could have eaten his wife. Now he wishes he had.

THE SELF-MADE MAN.

Buggins was boasting that he was a self-made man, and somebody remarked that it was a pity he hadn't made himself of a little better stuff, and not used quite so much for his ears.

A REAL LADY.

A country servant answered the door to a visitor, who declined giving her name.

"Was she a lady?" asked the mistress on her return home.

"Oh, yes, mum!" replied the maid, "I know she was a lady, for she wore one o' them squealskin jackets trimmed with oxtails."

HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS.

GENTLEMAN *(to crossing sweeper)*.—You seem to take a good deal of money. Why don't you buy a new broom instead of using that stump of a thing?

CROSSING SWEEPER *(scornfully)*.—Buy a new broom? D'ye want to ruin trade? If I 'ad a new broom people 'ud think as 'ow I never did no work with it. Any one can see as *you* never swep' a crossin'.

THAT EXPLAINED IT.

MISTRESS *(calling down stairs)*.—Jane, is that a man's voice in the kitchen?

JANE.—Oh, no, mum!

MISTRESS.—But I certainly did hear a man's voice.

JANE.—I was just having forty winks, mum, and must 'ave bin a talkin' in my sleep. Now you mention it, I was dreamin' of the greengrocer's young man, an' he do talk rather gruff, mum.

(And meanwhile the G.g.y.m. retired into the coal-cellar.)

NOT QUITE THE SAME THING.

"Have you ever been in battle, Charlie?" she asked her soldier lover as he kissed her.

"No, darling, but I've smelt powder," he said, wiping a little dab of it from the tip of his nose.

(She does not put it on quite so thick now.)

A PILL FOR THE DOCTOR.

DOCTOR.—My dear sir, I can't understand why your pulse should be so high?

PATIENT.—Nor I, doctor, unless, perhaps, it is from sympathy with your bill, which happens to be in my pocket.

NOT SO SHY AFTER ALL.

We know a clerical gentleman who boasts that he never kissed his wife till after she was married. After the company have expressed their opinion (mostly unfavourable) of his conduct, he meekly explains that he kissed the same lady frequently, but she wasn't his wife till then.

“ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE.”



AUGHT!” cried the hunter; “let it go!
 What though its down be left on my hand?
 It was but worth a chase or so;
 There are plenty more in this flowery land,
 From the merry hillside to the vale below;
 Its wing is crippled—let it go!”

Off and away, with a tarnished wing,
 From the merry hillside to the smoky town,
 A flaunting, draggled, tainted thing,
 That has lost the bloom of its first bright down.



To the hunter shame,
 To the victim woe!
 When of innocence rifled
 He—“let it go!”



MY FIRST APPEARANCE.



If you have tears, prepare to shed them now; get out your pocket-handkerchief and give a sympathetic sniff to the record of a blighted life. A life destined, I once hoped, to shed its radiance

upon a thankful world; to shine a bright particular star in the zenith of everlasting fame; but, alas, hopelessly and for ever extinguished by the snuffers of envious fortune, ere it had yet time to rise above the housetops of the commonplace.

My name is Theophilus Blowett—would it were otherwise, for thereby hangs my tale! From an early age I felt that I was born to greatness. My friends told me so, and I was convinced that they were right.

I felt a little uncertain at first, what particular kind of genius I should turn out to be. Art, literature, the drama, all had their charms for my sympathetic soul, but I decided on music. Music, sweet, soul-inspiring music should be my *forte*.

Then came the question, what particular instrument I should make my own. I wavered for some time between the ophicleide and the church organ, but finally determined upon the flute. I would play, and fascinate like Pan of old, upon the modern edition of the ancient pipe.

My family at first applauded my design, but after I had been practising steadily night and day for about a month they became less enthusiastic, and hinted that they thought my talents lay rather in the direction of painting or poetry. But this kind of thing is one of the penalties of genius. I felt that their advice was prompted by a mean and envious spirit, so I only blew the more.

In six months I had worn out two flutes with the energy of my practice, and could play "Auld Lang Syne," "Home, Sweet Home," and one or two other simple but effective *morceaux*.

I was about to pass to higher flights, when one morning there came a letter from an old friend residing in the country:—

"I hear," he said, "that you are quite an accomplished flautist, and feeling sure that you will be glad of an opportunity of assisting a truly deserving charity, I write to ask you to give your services at a concert which is to be held in this town next week, for a benevolent object. I have promised that you will come, so for Heaven's sake don't disappoint us."

At last (rather soon, in fact) my opportunity had come! I would appear at the concert; I would shine; faintly perhaps as compared with my future radiance, but all things must have a beginning. Even Rubenstein must have improved a great deal since he first came out.

So I went. Fast as the train could take me; armed with a new flute and several quires of music, including a "Starlight Sonata" of my own composition, with some remarkable effects.

The croaking of the frogs in the pond under the influence of the starlight was (though I say it, that shouldn't) a marvel of musical description.

Mudfog was a thriving town on the river Mire. Busy, well populated, it was just the place for a start. I shall never forget my reception at the railway station. They had positively laid down a strip of carpet, *red* carpet from the door to the carriage, which stood waiting! All the *élite* of the town had turned out to receive me. My friend Thomson was profuse in his thanks to me for coming, and I was literally overwhelmed with introductions. "Lady Strangles, Mr. Blowett, Mr. Blowett, Lady Strangles; Alderman Johnson, Mr. Blowett," etc.

I felt that it was all quite right and very nice, and I tried to look as if it was just what I was accustomed to. But to tell the truth I was beginning to feel rather nervous. It wasn't that I doubted my powers exactly, but it is better not to have people expect too much. I really wished they wouldn't be quite so complimentary.

But it was still worse as I rode to Thomson's place in a fly. The people in the streets stopped and stared at me as we went along, and some even raised their hats; and when I saw posters all over the town announcing that Mr. Theophilus Blowett, the distinguished flautist, had kindly consented to give a recital at the concert for providing funds to supply Argosy braces to the "Ojibbeway Indians," and when I observed further notices to the effect that "in consequence of the special attraction of Mr. Blowett's kind assistance, all the tickets were already sold," I began to feel more nervous still.

"It's all right," said Thomson, "don't worry yourself, old man. I purposely laid it on rather thick in order to do you a good turn; and I know from what your people say that your performances are really something out of the common."

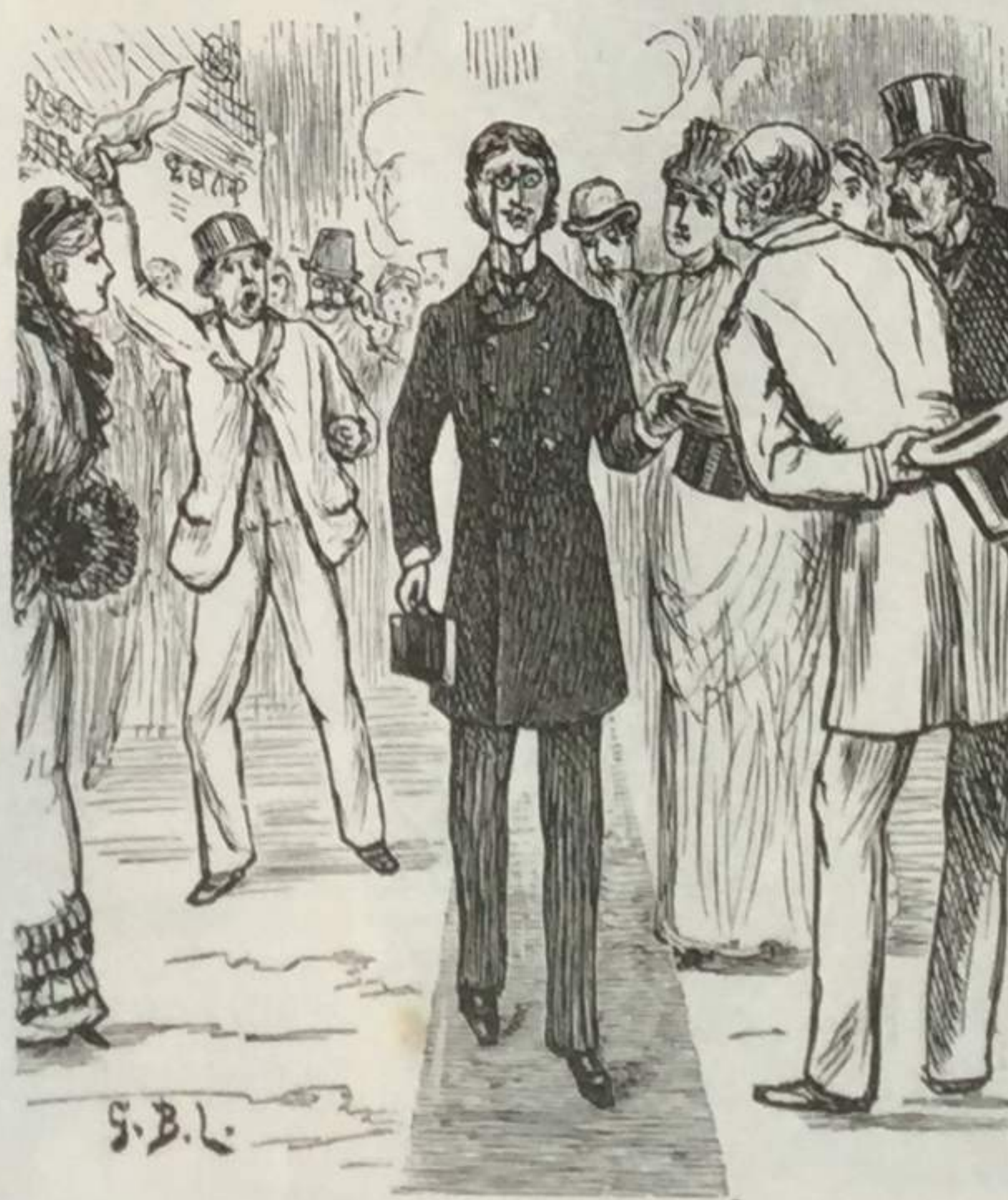
Consoled, but still a little diffident, I awaited the eventful night. It came; and, thank Heaven, it has gone, a horrid dream, an awful, hideous nightmare! But if I was nervous before the time, what were my feelings when the moment came for me to enter the "Green Room," as they called a sort of cupboard at the back of the hall, where were assembled, or more properly packed, Lady Strangles, Alderman Johnson, Sir Twopenny Whistle, the Rev. Whyte Longface, and I don't know who else.

My face was burning with tremendous heat; I felt that it was fiery red. My heart was keeping time to the *Prestissimo March* the band was playing by way of overture. But my genius held me up. "Come what will," I said to myself, "this night I'll place my foot on the first step of the ladder; perhaps two or three steps, perhaps half a dozen. Perhaps," but here I paused—I couldn't fairly expect more than half a dozen.

The audience was good humoured and appreciative, and included a tolerably strong contingent of musical amateurs and critics. In the front row were the representatives of the press, Mr. Spifkins of the *Mudlark*, Mr.

Whale of the *Mudfog Independent*, and half a dozen more, ready to record my success in imperishable print, the herald of fame.

At last, oh! trying and yet blissful moment, it was my turn.



Lady Strangles had performed upon the zither, Alderman Johnson had given a "Negro Interlude" in character and black, and the Rev. Whyte Longface had favoured the audience with a trombone solo.

I was to play "Home, Sweet Home," with variations, and the Hon. Elvina Strangles was to accompany me on the piano-forte. Sir Twopenny Whistle conducted the lady to the instrument, and Thomson preceded me generously to my music stand, and placed my music on it with a flourish, and then returning shook hands with me fervently just as I was going up the steps of the platform.

I felt that his intention was kind, but I wished he hadn't done it; it was so like saying "good bye" to somebody he never expected to see again.

"It's all right, you'll pull through, old man—cut along!"

I cut along—went on—I mean to say. My heart was not palpitating quite so violently now. In fact it seemed to have ceased beating altogether, and a cold, shivering sensation took the place of the burning heat that had filled my breast.

I bowed, I bowed again. Oh! how I wished I had nothing to do but bow! As I stepped to my place the audience rose, waved hats, handkerchiefs and umbrellas, and cheered and stamped, and cheered again!

It was very nice to find one's self so appreciated, particularly among strangers, but it was a little bewildering. The room seemed dancing round me; confused noises rang in my ears.

But the lady at the piano began, and I tried to join in—oh, horror! I had got the wrong end of the flute. I tried to smile, and turned it round; when I discovered for the first time that the music was upside down. I tried to reverse it, and it fell on the ground. With a frantic effort I picked it up—it was inside out—and I wildly determined to play from memory. Meanwhile my accompanist had stopped. She smiled amiably—I tried to smile in return.

"Go on! Hooray for Blowett!" cried a boy in the back row.

"Hear, hear!"—said the Rev. Whyte Longface in the reserved seats.

One superhuman effort and at last I began—in the wrong key!

"He's a toonin' up!" cried the boys at the back. "Ain't it prooty!"

Once more I started; this time—oh! Theophilus, why wast thou born?—this time the wrong melody. I had played two bars before I discovered that it did not fit in with the piano. I had merged somehow into "Auld Lang Syne."

"That's his patent way o' startin'! Go on!"

"Bravo!" from all parts of the room.

I tried once more. This time it was the right tune and the correct key; but for my very life I could not keep time with the piano. Further and further I fell behind, till at length the Hon. Elvina, who had got about six bars ahead, ceased playing

and sat utterly amazed, while the audience—oh! the wretches! positively began laughing and jeering at me.

Up rose Spifkins of the *Mudlark* with a sneer on his lips; up rose Whale of the *Independent* with a sarcastic laugh, and I—well, it was all over, it was clear; my star was not to shine that night. I turned to beat a hasty retreat, when—

What was that disturbance at the back of the hall? Why did all the people rise and stand on the seats and cheer and gaze at the door? Why did the representatives of the press resume their seats and begin furiously scribbling in their notebooks? Why did Alderman Johnson call me "a himpostor"? and above all, who was that long-haired man in a fur coat, who came with glaring eye and rapid strides down the centre of the room?

All the people made way for him, and as I turned once more to hide my blushes in the "Green Room," this individual sprang on to the platform, and, seizing me by the collar, forced me trembling, powerless with astonishment and shame, to my knees.

"So this, ladies and gentlemen," he cried, "this is the vile impostor! I have travelled two hundred miles to unmask him. What shall I do with him?"

"Hooray for Blowett!" "Which is Blowett?" "Burn him!" "Drown him!" "Sit on him!"—came from the wretches in front of me.

"This, ladies and gentlemen, is the miserable animal who would wrap himself in the lion's skin! This is the slimy scoundrel that tries to rob me of my well-earned fame, and would have a hoodwinked public believe that he, this miserable little counterfeiter, is the real and

original Theophilus Blowett, the great, unsurpassable flautist? Wretch, impostor, poltroon, if you were not beneath my notice—"

What he would have done, if I had not been beneath his notice, I can't say but he could scarcely have kicked me harder or more frequently, while the little wretches at the back shouted: "Go it, Blowett! Go it! Hooray!"

He did go it until his leg was tired (and with muddy boots, too), and then dropped me, fainting and half dead, on the lap of Alderman Johnson.

Oh! the perfidy of man! The villany of my so-called friends! Envious of my increasing skill, they had artfully laid a trap for me, and I had innocently fallen into it.

They knew, though I did not, that there was another Theophilus Blowett, a flautist of some celebrity for his talent, and still more for his fiery temper. They advertised my appearance, and sent one of the bills to my rival. They knew he was not the man to brook "two Richards in the field," and as the readers has seen, he didn't. The vile plot succeeded.

My flute still hangs in my bedroom. I write little odes to it sometimes, after the fashion of "The harp that once," etc., but I shall never blow it again. The "Starlight Sonata," too, is lost to an ungrateful world.

But for that first discouragement I might have been a Mozart or a Handel. As it is—I am a hairdresser.





MOTHER (to Miss Loo, aged four).—You mustn't step on my poor corns, dear, they pain me very badly.

MISS LOO.—I have seen a man with badder corns than yours, ma. He had only one leg and a stick up the other.

A little boy of seven, after gazing thoughtfully up at the sky, suddenly turned to his mother, and said:—

"I don't think the sky can be soft, or the angels would come tumbling through."

A lady expecting a visit from a gentleman, who had lost his nose but had had its place supplied by surgical means, said to her children before he arrived:—

"Now, children, this gentleman who is coming to dinner has got no nose, but you must not take any notice or say anything about it."

The gentleman arrived, and a bright little girl, the youngest of the family, climbed upon his knee and examined him with much interest.

Finding, as she supposed, that her mamma had made a mistake, she suddenly gave the artificial organ a poke with her forefinger, at the same time exclaiming, "Why, he *has* got a nose!"



A PAIR OF BLACK KIDS.

TEACHER.—Can any of you boys tell me what the Great Plague was?

TOMMY.—Lessons!

SHE THOUGHT SHE HAD IT AT LAST.

It is a pathetic sight to watch the meanderings of the childish mind through the intricacies of English Grammar. Little Jane had repeatedly been reproved for doing violence to the moods and tenses of the verb "to be." She would say "I be" instead of "I am," "you is," instead of "you are," and so on; and for a time it seemed as if no one could prevent it. Finally, her Aunt made it a rule not to answer an incorrect question, but to wait until it was corrected.

One day, the two sat together; Aunt Kate busy with embroidery, and little Jane over her dolls. Presently doll society became tedious, and the child's attention was attracted to the embroidery frame.

"Aunt Kate," said she, "please tell me what that is going to be."

But Aunt Kate was counting her stitches, and did not answer. Fatal word, *be*! It was her old enemy, and to it alone could the child ascribe the silence that followed.

"Auntie," she persisted, "with an honest attempt to correct her mistake, 'please tell me what that is going to *am*.'"

Still auntie sat silently counting, though her lips curled with amusement.

Jane sighed, but made another effort.

"Will you please tell me what that is going to *are*?"

Aunt Kate counted on, perhaps by this time actuated by a wicked desire to know what would come next. The little girl gathered up her energies for one last and great effort.

"Auntie, do tell me! What *am* that going to *was*?"

PRIZE COMPETITION.

A Prize of One Guinea will be given for the best Original Saying (witty or absurd) of a child under twelve.

Any contribution not gaining the prize, but considered good enough to be used, will be paid for.

As a guarantee of good faith, the real Name and Address of the sender must be given. The communication should be headed "Babes and Chucklings."

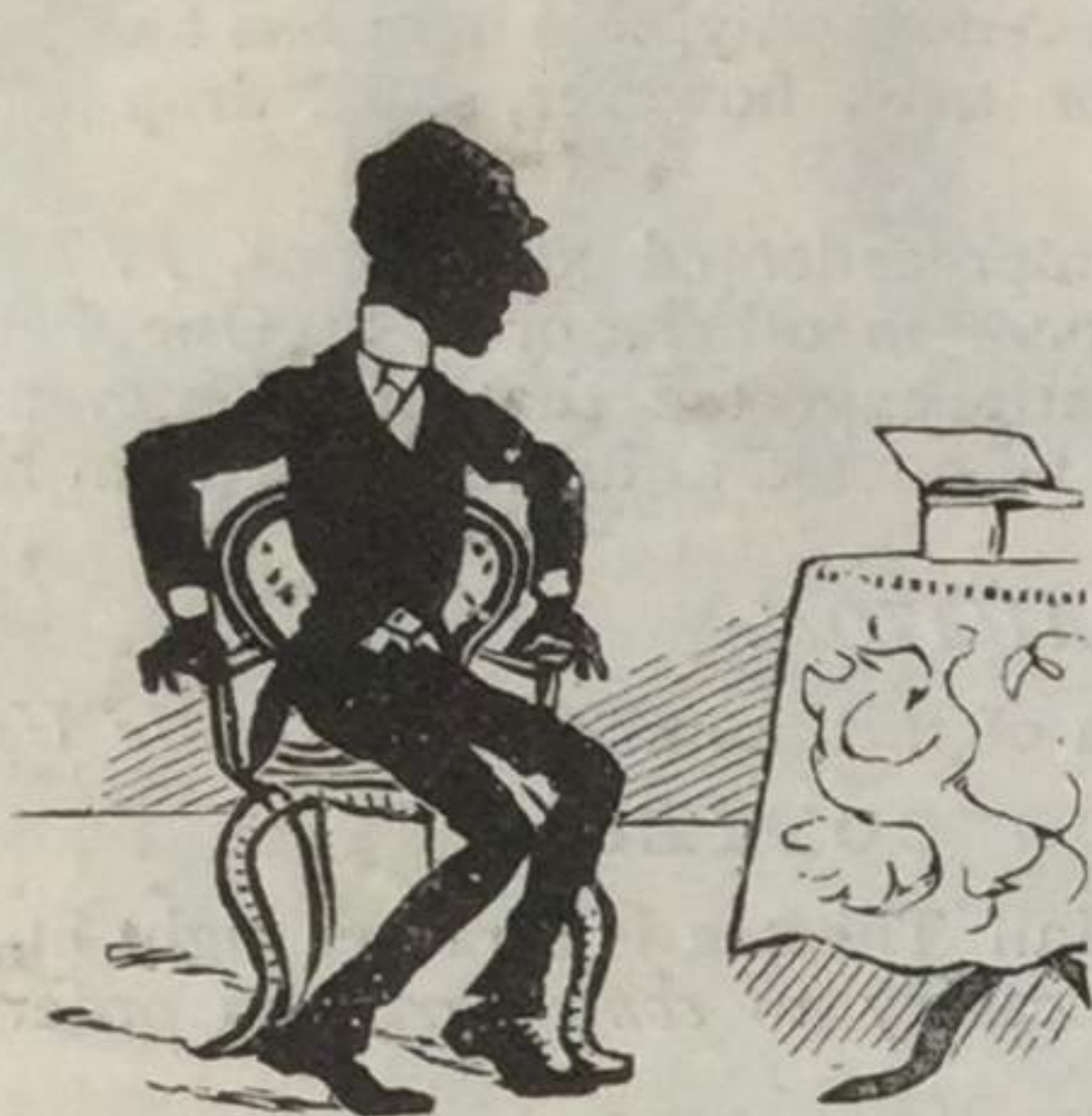
Close of the Competition, October 25, 1888.



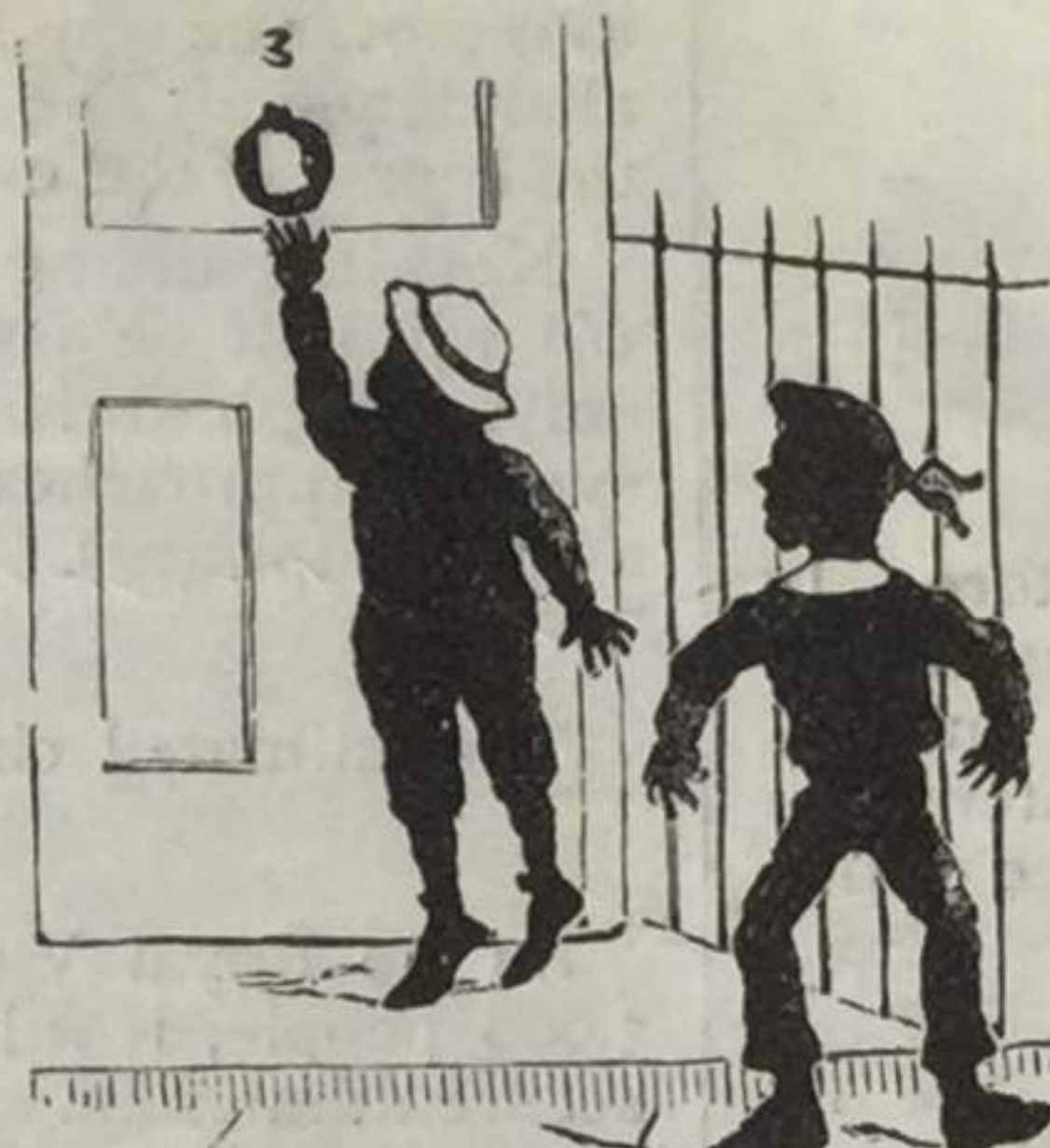
SARAH ANN.—Now, Johnny, come in under the humbereller. There's your Sunday clothes a-gettin' wet through.

(Illustration by our own R.A., aged nine.)

TOO SUCCESSFUL.



1. Mr. Parker was greatly annoyed



2. By rude boys,



3. Who knocked at the door and ran away.



4. So he attached some fish-hooks to the knocker, and awaited results.



5. Unfortunately the next person who called was his Aunt Eliza, from whom he had great expectations.



6. Oh! Crikey.



Almost Too Talkative.

"Oh, George," cried young Mrs. Merry, running to meet her husband at the door. "I've something splendid to tell you."

"No!" said George; "what is it?"

"Why, you'll never guess—the baby can talk! Yes, sir, actually talk! Come into the nursery and hear him."

George went in.

"Now, baby," said mamma, persuasively, "talk some for papa. Say, 'How do you do, papa?'"

"Goo, goo, goo, goo," says baby.

"Hear him," shrieks mamma, ecstatically. "Wasn't that just as plain as plain can be? Now say 'I'm glad to see you, papa.'"

"Da, da, goo, gee, goo."

"Did you ever hear?" cries mamma.

"He can just say every thing! Now my precious, say, 'Are you well, papa?'"

"Goo, ga, ge, goo, goo."

"There it is," said mamma. "Did you ever know a child of his age who could really talk as he does? He can just say any thing he wants to; can't you, you own dear little darling precious?"

"Goo, goo, gee gee, goo."

"Hear that? He says, 'Of course I can, just as plain as anybody can say it. Oh, George, it really worries me to have him so phenomenally bright. These very brilliant babies nearly always die young.'"

He Told the Truth for Once.

CUSTOMER.—What do you sell these cigars for?

ASSISTANT (*absently*).—Well, we sell 'em for Havanas; but they ain't, not by a long chalk.

A Slight Difference.

"Mr. Seaweed, you're no gentleman."

"What makes you think that?"

"My wife called at your house last evening, didn't she?"

"Yes, and was very welcome."

"As she drove away she heard you say to your wife, that she had a mouth like a horse-collar."

"Great Cæsar! Why, man, all I said was that she had a horse of a mouse colour."

A SPLENDID XMAS PRESENT.

A complete set of the celebrated

STEAMSHIP GAME

(sold at Five Shillings),

will be given, until further notice, gratis to every subscriber of

PICK ME UP

on receipt of the Annual Subscription of SIX SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE (inclusive of postage).

N.B.—The Game is on view at the PICK ME UP Offices.



We have a tremendous lot of this kind of thing in store. In fact, we are as "chockful of science" as Sol Gills himself, and our readers are bound to have it all, sooner or later. But this week we know of nothing of such throbbing popular interest as the fact that, in order duly to inaugurate the appearance of this paper, a grand

PICK ME UP ENTERTAINMENT

will take place at 8 p.m. on Monday, the 8th inst., at the

ROYAL VICTORIA HALL

(late Victoria Theatre),

(five minutes' walk from the Strand, opposite Waterloo Station),

and that all readers of *Pick Me Up* are invited, so far as space will admit, to be present.

To the Gallery, Gallery Stalls, Pit, and Pit Stalls, admission will be absolutely **FREE**, the mere production of a copy of *Pick Me Up*, bought, begged, or borrowed, being sufficient voucher; without such voucher no person (were he the Lord Mayor himself) will be admitted.

This wholesale liberality will no doubt come expensive, but we don't mind. What are a few thousands more or less to introduce an institution like *Pick Me Up* to a palpitating public?

But there is method in our madness. What, though (like the old lady with the eggs) we lose on each individual we admit. The *quantity pays*! Besides, we want to study character and to make the acquaintance of our readers, and we have invited the whole of our editorial staff, and many other distinguished personages, to meet them.

Spoffins will be there, all there; and it is expected that he will take the opportunity of introducing himself and saying a few words to the audience.

Mr. John Radcliff, the world-renowned flautist of the Promenade Concerts, and Mdle. Vittoria Del Bono, the charming violinist, have promised solos on their respective instruments.

Professor Field, the Wizard of the North, South, East, and West, who has had the honour of entertaining H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on several occasions, will appear (up to his tricks as usual).

Mesdames Pauline Rita, Fanny Edwards, Florence Hipwell, and Evelyn Kingsbury; also Messrs. Henry Pyatt (of the Carl Rosa Company), Franklin Clive, A. L. Oswald, Orlando Harley, and Herbert Thorndyke, will thrill the audience with their songs; while Messrs. E. J. Odell (of the Avenue Theatre), William Rignold (of the Vaudeville Theatre), and Fawcett Rowe, will tickle your fancy with their recitations.

Mr. Charles Collette (by kind permission of Mr. F. J. Harris, of the Opera Comique) will make you laugh with his comic songs, and Mr. Cleary will run over from the Gaiety Theatre and tell some funny stories.

Mr. Robert Ganthony (of the Lyceum Theatre) will execute a solo on the piano with a hat. Mr. Alfred West will play the "West Patrol," and, alternately with Mr. Theodore Drew, will preside at the pianoforte. Mr. Fleming Norton, whose entertainments were given for over 250 nights at the Egyptian Hall, and who has had likewise the honour of appearing before H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, will amuse you after his accustomed fashion; and last, not least, you will have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Geoffrey Thorn, the author and composer of

"She wanted to be a Fairy," of "Houp-là," and the coming pantomimes at the Pavilion and Grand Theatre.

An endeavour has been made to induce Professor Baldwin (if still living) to go through his celebrated parachute performance, but in consequence of the proprietors of the Hall declining to remove the roof for one evening only, this item has had to be abandoned. The professor may, however, still "drop in" in the course of the evening.

Notwithstanding these unprecedented attractions, *Pick Me Up* will still be issued at par—in other words, at One Penny only, though it is confidently expected that, as the eventful evening approaches, it will be quoted at any amount from half-a-crown upwards.

CAUTION.

The estimated circulation of this number of *Pick Me Up* is
75,000 COPIES.

As the Royal Victoria Hall Theatre is a rather tight fit for 3,000 people, it will be necessary to *come early*, in order to secure admission.

The doors will be opened at 7.30. By being there about luncheon-time you ought to be able to secure a good seat.

Carriages at 11 o'clock. Those who haven't any will have to 'bus it, or walk.

Bear in mind that the Pit, Pit Stalls, the Gallery and Gallery Stalls, are absolutely **FREE**, the production of a copy of *Pick Me Up* being all that is needed to entitle the bearer to admission.

The Balcony, Stalls, and Private Boxes (for the convenience of the Royal Family and other special swells) will be reserved at the following prices:—

Balcony	...	...	...	1/-
Stalls	...	...	...	1/-, 2/-, 3/-
Private Boxes	...	...	...	10/6 to 40/-

(To holders of *PICK ME UP* only.)

FULL BAND.

Conductor Mr. W. E. SUTCH.

Copies of *Pick Me Up* may be procured of any newsagent, but will NOT be sold at the Hall!



ANOTHER OUTRAGE ON THE POLICE.

STOUT POLICEMAN.—Hi! you boys, what are you running away for?

THIRD BOY (*behind*).—They was afraid you was a goin' to bust.

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